IN THE CLAIMS

The currently pending claims are listed below. No claims have been amended. Claim 14-22 have been presently cancelled.

1. (Previously presented) A method for detecting the presence or amount of HCV nucleic acids in a test sample, comprising:

(a) reverse transcribing and amplifying HCV nucleic acid if present in said sample using a pair of oligonucleotide primers having the sequences set forth in SEQ ID NO:1 and SEQ ID NO:2;

(b) hybridizing said amplified HCV nucleic acids with an oligonucleotide probe consisting of the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO:3 in the presence of an enzyme that cleaves said probe when said probe hybridizes to said HCV nucleic acids, wherein said probe is conjugated to a detectable label that generates a detectable signal upon said cleavage; and

(c) detecting a signal from said detectable label, wherein said signal indicates the presence or amount of HCV nucleic acids in said test sample.

2-7. (Cancelled)

8. (Previously presented) A method according to claim 1, wherein said probe is conjugated to 2'-chloro-7'-phenyl-1,4-dichloro-6-carboxyfluorescein (VIC) and 6-carboxytetramethylrhodamine (TAMRA).

9. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising introducing lambda phage-HCV nucleic acid hybrids into said test sample, reverse transcribing and amplifying using the pair of oligonucleotide primers of amplifying step (a) to produce lambda phage-HCV hybrid amplicons.

10. (Previously presented) The method of claim 9, wherein said lambda phage-HCV hybrid amplicons are hybridized to a control oligonucleotide probe having the sequence set forth in SEQ ID NO: 6, wherein the control oligonucleotide probe is conjugated to 6-carboxyfluorescein (FAM) and 6-carboxytetramethylrhodamine (TAMRA).

11. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein said test sample is selected from the group consisting of serum, blood, plasma, cerebral spinal fluid, synovial fluid, and urine.

12. (Previously presented) The method of claim 1, wherein nucleic acids are purified from said sample prior to said reverse transcription and amplification step (a).

13. (Previously presented) The method of claim 8, wherein lambda phage-HCV ribonucleic acid hybrids are introduced into said test sample prior to isolating nucleic acids from said sample.

14-22 (Cancelled)